

# Installing On a Foam Pad

SynLok Adhesives Guidelines and Tips  
August 2020

## Key Word is Caution

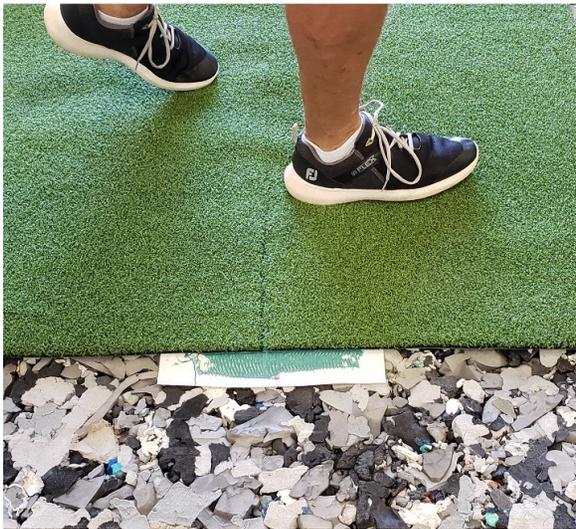
Installing on a pad for any reason is something that requires an installer to be cautious and pay particular attention. A pad is used most often for shock absorption on playgrounds, sports fields, training facilities and just for general comfort. Absorbing that shock means the pad is flexible. When installing a seam, flexibility can have a major impact on seam installation performance.

These photos show that seam results are affected when activity occurs near a seam during the curing process. The impact can be extremely hard to notice so particular care needs to be made while inspecting the seam. Movement definitely affects the bond as stress is applied to the seam with every impact preventing a constant and secure bond.

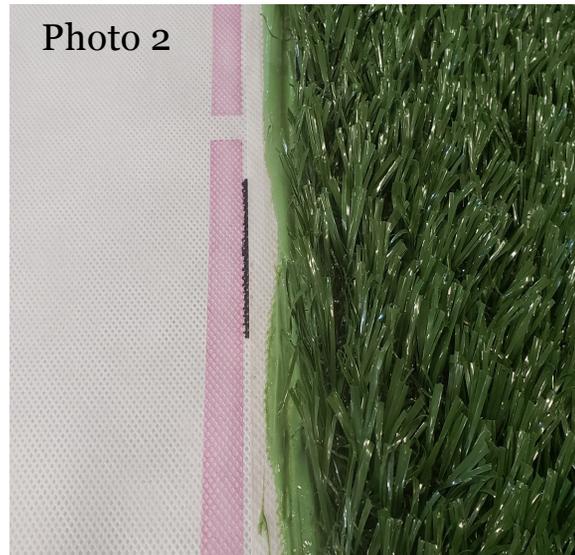
Many different types and thicknesses of foam underlayments are manufactured for the synthetic turf industry and all have qualities that can affect seam performance so please consider this information when installing over a pad.

There are several test to determine ILD (Indentation Load Density) which is determined by how many pounds it takes to compress a specific foam by 25%. Installers walking around seams compress foam. If it compresses an 1/8 of an inch it pulls the seam an 1/8 of an inch. Three trips without paying attention and you have a 3/8 gap in your seam.

In the two photos below a perfectly good seam was walked on and easily created a 3/8 gap. You can reposition that, even several times, but at some point it can potentially harm the bond of the adhesives. In this case, an obvious problem was created.



We created another test to show how high traffic can separate a seam. You can't see the black line next to our seam tape in Photo 1. Next, we knelt on a knee far enough away to reach with a trowel and you can see in Photo 2 the turf seam tape moved an 1/8 exposing our black line. This is performed on a playground foam that has a rough surface lying on a flat surface. A smooth foam under a thin putting green material that is lying on a slope to form a break for a golf ball is really hard to seam and not have it affected.



The proper way to maintain a seam on a foam pad is to limit any activity near the seam whenever possible. Laying the seam in right and using a carpet tractor while having a board of some type to stand and kneel on is preferred. Adding weight after the seam is repositioned is very important. We show in a photo below that you can add spikes to hold turf until the seam cures. Easily removed after the seam has cured.



## Moisture is a Factor

Moisture has an impact on most polyurethane adhesives. It can potentially expand the adhesive if too much moisture and too much adhesive has been applied. Too much can speed up the initial grab time and decrease the amount of time allowed for repositioning and making corrections.

Foam pads affect moisture content from the ground so initial grab can be longer. Activity near the seam during this time is not recommended.

Hot sun can bake moisture out of the pad and turf so initial grab can be longer. Activity near the seam during this time is not recommended.

If you have low humidity, hot sun and a pad you may need to add a "mist" of moisture to speed up the initial grab. Caution when applying "mist" as too much can be a concern. Hand rolling while kneeling on a weight distribution product is recommended.

We recommend Turf Claw MP on a pad because of its low sensitivity to moisture and its non-expanding properties.

Foam pads have another area of moisture concern. Open cell foam will retain moisture and closed cell foam will not allow moisture to permeate from soil underneath. Urethane adhesives are sensitive to moisture so it is best to be able to determine what type of foam you have and whether your project will require less adhesive or a longer period to grab.

To help address this issue we have developed Turf Claw MP, a moisture cured urethane with a low requirement for moisture sensitivity.

Pads are a necessity in the synthetic turf industry for many projects but being able to seam on top of them requires more attention and caution than most any other seam.

If you have a pad project and you are not certain how to proceed please give our SynLok Adhesives customer service a call and we will give you some direction. Our first advice is to plan ahead, understand what type of foam you are working with and be prepared.

SynLok Adhesives – 1-888-796-5655  
Customer Care